

19 December 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Project FOCUS

1. Introduction. The Director of Central Intelligence has instructed the Chairman, USIB Human Sources Committee to develop an assessment mechanism to provide the DCI with an annual letter to Chiefs of Mission stating Mr. Colby's views on:

- (a) total Mission reporting on host country affairs;
- (b) Mission coverage of third country and hard target affairs;
- (c) the importance of selected installations in his area to national intelligence objectives.

The letter is to provide the Chief of Mission "with a regular and candid appraisal of the performance of his Mission, viewed from [the DCI's] perspective, and with appropriate comments as to the future." Mr. Colby notes that "the Chief of Diplomatic Mission has, in addition to his other duties, a most important role in establishing local priorities, targeting, developing new sources, and setting patterns for utilization of resources to assure Mission collection and reporting responsiveness to the Key Intelligence Questions and other national intelligence needs."

2. Project FOCUS of the Human Sources Committee calls for a series of assessments to be conducted during the coming months. Several procedures have been developed within the HSC. FOCUS B would consist of a number of assessments of Embassy reporting acquired from seminar-like gatherings of selected analysts from around the community. One end product

of these assessments would be a letter from the DCI to the appropriate Ambassador commenting on the strengths and weaknesses of reporting, expressing the DCI's appreciation of the Mission's past contribution to national intelligence objectives, and containing appropriate comments intended to improve the situation even further in the future.

3. The Seminar. FOCUS B seminars would be conducted regarding relatively simple Embassy collection situations. The assessment portion of the exercise usually would be jointly sponsored by the appropriate NIO and by the HSC. During half-day seminars, analysts from concerned Departments and Agencies would discuss the adequacy, appropriateness, and utility of [redacted] reporting from a given Embassy (or regarding a particular problem). The discussion would be led by the NIO, his assistant, or by another designated person. In all cases, a summary of the salient points would be drafted, perhaps by the chairperson. The summary would be circulated to the participants for comments and suggestions. Ultimately, a paper satisfactory to the NIO (or the chairperson) would be sent to the HSC.

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4. The usual procedure would be as follows.

- (a) An agenda would be drafted by the chairperson, in consultation with the seminar participants. It would then be circulated to participants for their consideration. Ordinarily, the agenda would consist of substantive topics or areas of concern.
- (b) The seminar would be held. All participants would be encouraged to be as forthright and candid as possible.
- (c) A summary of reporting strengths and weaknesses would be prepared. The opinions of the participants would be reflected, though the comments of particular individuals would not be identified as such.
- (d) Comments and suggestions would be received by the chairperson. He would react to them to the extent that he felt necessary. When he was satisfied with the draft, it would be forwarded to the Human Sources Committee.

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5. HSC Responsibilities. The HSC would encourage NIO participation in a FOCUS project; facilitate the holding of seminars; provide staff and other services, as requested; and occasionally act as chairperson or reporter. The HSC Secretariat will remain fully informed of the progress of the FOCUS assessment development, will receive draft agendas, will attend seminar sessions, etc.

6. Upon receipt of the summary evaluation from the seminar chairperson, the HSC will forward the same to appropriate human source collection managers, under cover an appropriate letter. The human source collection managers will be asked to consider the strengths and weaknesses of reporting identified in the evaluation as these pertain to the past activities of its collection elements, the adequacy of intelligence guidance to its collectors, the particular collection environment involved, and the possibility for improvements in future reporting. The collection managers will be asked to respond in writing through their HSC Member to the Chairman, HSC regarding what they are doing in response to the FOCUS assessment. This information will be put in HSC files, will be available to Intelligence Community managers, as appropriate, and may result in follow-up activity by the Human Sources Committee or by its Chairman.

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8. DCI Letters. The DCI letters will be drafted within the Secretariat, coordinated with the ESG, the Chairman, the chairman of the FOCUS seminar, and other appropriate entities, before being routed through the Intelligence Community Staff to the Director of Central Intelligence. These letters will reflect the FOCUS seminar discussions, but will not go into that level of detail. Moreover, the letters will be forward-looking, stressing the DCI's hopes and expectations for future reporting, and highlighting past contributions of the Mission as a whole. The effort is to encourage the Chief of Diplomatic Mission to more fully assume his appropriate role "in establishing local priorities, targeting, developing new sources, and setting patterns for utilization of resources to assure Mission collection and reporting responsiveness to the Key Intelligence Questions and other national intelligence needs." (See above for additional language from the Letter of Instruction to the Chairman, HSC.)

9. Ordinarily, the DCI letter will discuss Mission reporting against particular substantive concerns, but will not explicitly differentiate between reporting from the various components of the Mission. For example, the letter might deal with reporting on economic matters, but may not indicate who the originating component of such reporting happens to be. On the other hand, when apparent misuses of Embassy resources are identified in the FOCUS seminar discussions or elsewhere, these will be called to the Ambassador's attention, at Mr. Colby's option.

10. The DCI letter is intended to facilitate the improvement of future reporting, not emphasize the grading of past reporting efforts. As the FOCUS Project is a new effort, the HSC and other participants expect to learn from their efforts and to modify procedures as we progress.

11. Follow-on Guidance. Specific citations of especially useful past reporting efforts, as cited during the interagency seminar discussions, ordinarily would not be included in the DCI letter, but may well be transmitted through other channels to the appropriate Embassy component. Comments on past reporting are an especially useful guidance tool. The FOCUS effort is intended to encourage more meaningful guidance activity, as the seminar participants learn

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from their own interaction more about the real collection potentials of various Embassy components. Follow-on guidance activities will be encouraged. In this connection, the HSC suggests a number of guidance vehicles:

- (a) secure interagency telephonic conferences to selected Embassies abroad. Conference facilities are available in the HSC Secretariat.
- (b) State official/informal letters. These can be facilitated through HSC channels.
- (c) formal requirements. Interagency requirements can be issued through the HSC mechanism; other requirements may be sent through regular requirements channels. Requirements should be limited to those situations where a specific tasking is necessary and intended.
- (d) the HSC-sponsored Current Intelligence Reporting List and its companion EIC-sponsored Economic Alert List. These documents offer the possibility of transmitting appropriate guidance to a wide range of human source collectors.

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